

DOCKET NO.: FCI-2679/C3319
Application No.: 10/626,295
Office Action Dated: December 7, 2004

PATENT

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached sheets of drawings includes changes to Figs. 1-18. The sheets, which include Figs. 1-18, replace the original sheets including Figs. 1-18.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet(s)

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending. Claims 4, 7, 8, 17, 20, 23, and 33 have been withdrawn from consideration based on an election requirement. Claims 1, 2, 13, 18, and 28 have been amended, and claims 5, 6, 15, 21, 22, 29, 31, and 34-37 have been canceled in this reply. No new claims have been added. Claims 1-4, 7-14, 16-20, 23-28, 30, 32, and 33 therefore will be pending upon entry of the above amendments.

The drawings have been objected to because Figures 2-6, and 10-18 allegedly do not show the structure of the elements depicted therein. Replacement drawings that clearly show the structure of the elements depicted therein accompany this response.

The Examiner has indicated that paragraphs [0044], [0046], [0047], [0053], and [0054] include terms that are not consistent. Paragraphs [0044], [0046], [0047], [0053], [0054], [0056], and [0066] have been amended so that the terms therein are consistent. Applicant thanks the Examiner for bringing these inconsistencies to Applicant's attention.

Claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 13-16, 22, and 31 have been objected to because the term "first electrically-conductive member" appearing in line 4 of claim 2 should read --second electrically-conductive member--. Claim 2 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 6, 9, 22, 24, and 31 have been objected to because the features recited therein allegedly are not clearly shown in the drawings. Replacement drawings accompany this response. Applicant respectfully notes that the barrier (50a, 50b), recess (52a, 52b), and other features recited in claims 9, 22, and 31 are clearly shown in the replacement drawings. The slot (49), projections (51, 53), and other features recited in claims 9 and 24 likewise are clearly shown in the replacement drawings.

Claim 13 has been objected to. The basis of the objection set forth in the office action is that "first" appears to be --second--." Office action at pg. 2, line 18. Applicant is unable to identify the alleged discrepancy that the Examiner is referring to in this objection.

Clarification of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 9-16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24-32, and 34-37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. patent no. 6,024,584 (Lemke) in view of U.S. patent no. 5,704,794 (Lindeman) and U.S. patent no. 5,174,764 (Kandybowski). (Applicant respectfully notes that the office action states that claims "24-32 and 24-37" have been

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Office action at pg. 3, lines 1, 2. Applicant believes this is a typographical error, and that the noted language should read “24-32 and 34-37.”

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner notify Applicant if this assumption is incorrect.)

Claims 5, 6, 15, 21, 22, 29, 31, and 34-37 have been canceled, thereby rendering the above rejection moot with respect to those claims. Applicant respectfully submits that the remaining claims, as amended herein, are patentably distinct from the cited references for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites a first and a second electrically-conductive member for conducting electrical power. The Examiner has characterized the plates (17, 18) of Lindeman as respective first and second electrically-conductive members as recited in claim 1 of the present application. Office action at pg. 3, lines 8-11. Applicant respectfully notes that the plates (17, 18) form a ground plane for the connector (11) of Lindeman. Lindeman spec. at col. 6, lines 19, 20. The plates (17, 18) are not used to conduct electrical power.

In the interest of advancing prosecution of the application, however, claim 1 has been amended to recite a second connector body having a barrier formed from a dielectric material, the barrier being located between the second electrically-conductive member and the second plurality of signal contacts, wherein the barrier becomes disposed in a recess formed in the first connector body and having a shape substantially similar to the shape of the barrier so that the first and second plurality of signal contacts are substantially electrically isolated from the first and second electrically-conductive members when the first and second connector halves are mated.

The barrier and recess recited in amended claim 1 can facilitate the transmission of power through the first and second electrically-conductive members. In particular, the barrier substantially electrically isolates the first and second plurality of signal contacts from the first and second electrically-conductive members when the barrier is disposed in the recess. The barrier and recess thereby can permit the transmission of power through the first and second electrically-conductive members, without substantial degradation of the signals transmitted through the first and second plurality of signal contacts. *See* original application at ¶ 0073.

Applicant respectfully submits that Lemke, Lindeman, and Kandybowski, either alone or in combination, neither teach or suggest a barrier located between a second electrically-

conductive member and a second plurality of signal contacts, wherein the barrier becomes disposed in a recess formed in a first connector body and having a shape substantially similar to the shape of the barrier so that a first and the second plurality of signal contacts are substantially electrically isolated from a first and a second electrically-conductive member when a first and a second connector half are mated. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that amended claim 1 is patentably distinct from Lemke, Lindeman, and Kandybowski.

Claim 13 has been amended to recite: one of the receptacle and plug bodies comprises a barrier formed from a dielectric material and located between one of the first and second power contact strips and one of the first and second plurality of signal contacts, and the other of the receptacle and plug bodies has a recess formed therein for receiving the barrier and having a shape substantially similar to a shape of the barrier so that the first and second plurality of signal contacts are substantially electrically isolated from the first and second contact power strips when the receptacle and the plug are mated.

Claim 18 has been amended to recite: one of the receptacle body and the plug body comprises a barrier formed from a dielectric material and located between one of the first and second power contact strips and one of the first and second plurality of signal contacts, and the other of the receptacle body and the plug body has a recess formed therein and having a shape substantially similar to a shape of the barrier for receiving the barrier when the receptacle and the plug are mated.

Claim 28 has been amended to recite: one of the first and second connector bodies comprises a barrier formed from a dielectric material and located between one of the first and second electrically-conductive members and one of the first and second plurality of signal contacts, and the other of the first and second connector bodies has a recess formed therein and having a shape substantially similar to a shape of the barrier for receiving the barrier when the first and second connector halves are mated.

Applicant therefore respectfully submits that amended claims 13, 18, and 28 are patentably distinct from Lemke, Lindeman, and Kandybowski, for the reasons stated above in relation to claim 1.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 13, 18, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and remarks. Withdrawal of the

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rejection of claims 2, 3, 9-12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 24-27, 30, and 32, which depend from claims 1, 13, 18, or 28, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is also requested.

A notice of allowability is respectfully requested.

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Frank T. Carroll
Registration No. 42,392

Woodcock Washburn LLP
One Liberty Place - 46th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103
Telephone: (215) 568-3100
Facsimile: (215) 568-3439